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LAFAYETTE VISTAS

Capital Projects Funding Committee Recommends Bond Issue for Needed Road Repairs

Having driven on some of the City's more primitive roads, most people in Lafayette were not surprised to read in the last issue of Vistas that many of our streets need extensive repair. Every week the City receives calls and emails from residents reporting potholes in their neighborhoods. Several people – including an entire group who live on Camino Colorados — have also come to Council meetings to express their concerns. Unfortunately, while the Council understands the gravity of the situation and sympathizes with the residents' distress, the City does not have the money to make all the necessary repairs. Without the funds needed to implement a comprehensive solution, neighborhood roads in Lafayette will deteriorate faster than we fix them.

A thorough assessment of every public road in Lafayette, completed by the City Engineering Department earlier this year, put a price tag totaling $42 million on the problem. Over the next 10 years, the City will receive $20 million in tax revenue dedicated for road repair, but that still leaves a hefty $22 million deficit (which is projected to escalate to $29 million by 2014).

Lafayette's all-volunteer Capital Projects Funding Committee (CPFC) has been working closely with City staff to study the problem and propose viable solutions. The committee members, all of whom are technical and financial professionals, serve as advisors to the City Council and act as representatives for Lafayette residents. It was this same group of citizens that back in 1995 proposed Lafayette's first-ever bond measure. That ballot measure, which allowed the City to sell bonds totaling $13 million supported by a property tax of $21 per $100,000 in assessed value, was approved by 68% of the voters. The bond proceeds were used to rebuild the City's storm drain system and improve major thoroughfares.

Those projects are now complete and the money has been exhausted. Our challenge now is to extend the road repair projects to the neighborhood streets.

CPFC Conclusions

#1: With the current fiscal climate in both Sacramento and Washington, nobody else is going to pay for these repairs. It is up to the City take care of the problem.

#2: The problem is too big to solve using current revenues. Total annual General Fund expenses are $7 million, $1 million of which is already dedicated to road and drain capital improvements. The rest of the budget is devoted to police services, public works, planning, parks and administration. Tightening our belts will not address the total issue.

#3: Issuing bonds is an appropriate and efficient way to generate revenue for road and drain projects. The committee looked at several possible options, including a parcel tax, establishing assessment districts for each neighborhood, and issuing bonds. The CPFC members unanimously agreed that issuing bonds was the best alternative.

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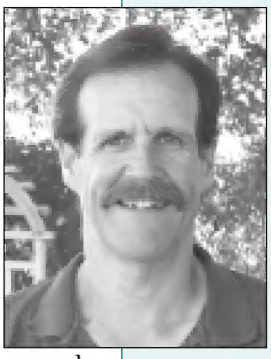
CPFC Members Talk About the Issue

***Will Tissue**, 36-year Resident, Member of the Capital Projects Assessment Committee (CPAC) and the CPFC, Retired Civil Engineer*

"Many of the main roads in Lafayette are now in good condition as a result of the last bond issue, which allowed us to spend between $4-5 million a year. Obviously, we want to maintain the good condition of those roads but there are still many others that need work. To do that, we need about $5 million a year. When we looked at all the information and found that the City could fund only $2 million a year, it was pretty logical to recommend a bond issue."

***Donald Lively**, 43-year Resident, Representative of the Taxpayers Association, Retired Division Manager from Pacific Bell*

"The Taxpayer's Association recognizes that maintaining our streets is a need, not a want and everyone is obligated to pay for needs. If we don't pay for it now, we will certainly pay more later. Because fixing our roads is a capital expense with a long term benefit, it is logical to fund it by borrowing. Businesses get loans, cities issue bonds. The good news is that Lafayette has an excellent credit rating, which helps reduce our borrowing cost."



***Hunter Holding**, 13-year Resident, Owner of Deer Hill Ranch, Public Finance and Investment Banking Professional for 20 years*

"In 1995 when we placed the previous Road & Drain Bond issue on the ballot we gave a lot of consideration to the fact that Lafayette had never passed a bond issue before. In deciding how much money to raise at that time, we relied heavily on polls which suggested how much people were likely to approve. That amount was never seen as a total solution, but rather as one that took care of the most immediate problems."

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Capital Projects Funding.... *continued from front page*

Their recommendation to the City Council is to seek voter approval of a measure on the November ballot that would allow the City to sell bonds up to $29 million. The cost of the bonds would be supported by extending the assessment approved in 1995 and levying an additional property tax of $19 per $100,000 in assessed value.

The City Council will hold special meetings in September to provide residents with a thorough understanding of the extent of the problem and the plans for funding and repairs. (Dates will be posted on the city website: **www.lovelafayette.org**). CPFC members encourage residents to come to those meetings, and they have also expressed a willingness to talk to residents individually about this bond measure.

CPFC Members Talk.... *continued from front page*

***Ned Robinson**, 47-year resident, City Council Member 1970-1982 & 1984-1986, Retired Land Use Lawyer*

"We've been looking at this issue for a couple of years, first assessing the situation, and then determining a cost. My first reaction when I saw the report from the Engineering Department was 'Hey I thought the Road & Drain Bond in 1995 was supposed to solve our road problems. What happened?' However, after I was reminded that the money from those bonds was originally intended only for repairs to major streets, I am persuaded that this work now needs to be extended to the neighborhoods."

***Ed Presten**, 38-year Resident, Member of the Taxpayers Association, Retired from Montgomery Ward*

"When our committee first met, there was a lot of discussion about the fact that we had a bond issue in 1995 and now here we are asking for money again. Some people may wonder why. The best explanation is the honest answer: that money has been used and now we need more money to expand the scope of work. The need for the money is real."

***John Larson**, 33-year Resident, CPAC Member for 10 years, Mechanical Engineer and Asset Manager*

"One thing people should know is that all the projects slated to be done using money from the 1995 Road and Drain Bond have been finished. Those projects were managed well and done successfully. Since the drain work was done, there have been no flooding problems, which had been a major problem before. I respect the City staff — they did a thorough job preparing the assessment report and crunching the numbers. I feel comfortable relying on that information."

***Walter Kieser**, 16-year Resident, Managing Principal with Economic & Planning Systems, Urban Economists*

"The fundamental problem of roads in need of repair is no surprise. What might be a surprise to some people is the amount of money needed. As a committee we were very cautious in deciding how much money to ask for. $29 million will not make our roads perfect — it is, however, the least amount of money we feel we can get by with and still address the entire problem in a responsible way."

PASSING THE BATON

With the start of our new fiscal year on July 1st, Lafayette also gets a new Police Chief, as the baton is passed from **Hank Davis**, who is retiring after 4 years in Lafayette and 29 years with the Sheriff's Department, to **Mike Fisher.**

Mike is no stranger to Lafayette though: this will be his second term of duty here, having served as a police sergeant in Lafayette from 1997-2000. A 23-year veteran of the Sheriff's Department, Fisher has served in a wide variety of positions including: SWAT team member, Detective in Bay Point, Internal Affairs Investigator, West County Detention Facility Guard, Sheriff's Boat Patrol, Court Security, and member of "Clean Street"– an extremely effective joint drug enforcement program with the city of Richmond. With all this experience, Fisher says, "I know the nuts and bolts of police work. The part that is new to me is budgeting. Knowing that Lafayette is very cost conscious, Chief Davis has done a great job of teaching me about budgets during our transition period."

Fisher said he is looking forward to his new position and to being in Lafayette again. "Lafayette is a very nice city, but that doesn't mean bad things can't happen here. They can, and we need to be vigilant and ready to respond. Because Lafayette has such a small police department, the role of each officer is extremely important. There are good officers here and I look forward to working with them to preserve the peace and maintain the quality of life in Lafayette."

During his tenure in Lafayette, Chief Davis undertook a number of successful endeavors. These include improving responsiveness to traffic and parking issues, setting up a pedestrian safety program, and replacing the plain white patrol cars with more identifiable black and whites.

Well known for his passion for the Giants, Davis, and his wife sold their home in Lafayette and bought a condo in San Francisco near Pac Bell Park. They plan to spend much of their time traveling. Davis said, "I am going to miss Lafayette. I've worked in several other cities in the area, and this is the best. The only reason I would ever leave here is for retirement."

So as we welcome Chief Mike Fisher to Lafayette, we also thank Hank Davis and wish him the best in the years to come. *Go Giants!*

ROAD REPAIR SURVEY

Your Opinion Matters

Please fill out the following survey and return it to the City Offices by September 1, 2004.
You can mail it, fax it, drop it off, or respond on our website at **www.lovelafayette.org.**

1 ***What is the current condition of the street on which you live?***

- ☐ Excellent: Does not need repair
- ☐ Good: Needs minor repair
- ☐ Fair: Potholes and cracks need to be filled
- ☐ Poor: Needs to be totally rebuilt

2 ***What other Lafayette streets do you regularly use?***

_____

_____

_____

_____

3 ***Are there streets on which you travel that, in your opinion, should be repaired within the next two years?***

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

4 ***If Yes, which streets?***

_____

_____

_____

_____

5 The Capital Projects Funding Committee has determined that the funding shortfall for road repairs is $29 million and has recommended that voters be allowed to consider a road repair bond measure. ***Recognizing that the City's total annual operating budget is $7 million, do you have other suggestions for funding the shortfall?***

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6 ***Would you support a neighborhood road & drain tax of up to $39 in assessed value?***

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

***Name** (optional):*

_____

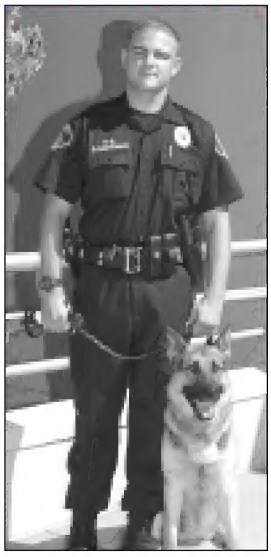
***Address** (optional):*

_____

_____

Cut Here ✂

German Shepherd Helps Protect Lafayette



Talk about stretching a budget…Lafayette has one member of the Police Department that works for dog food! Noah, a Dutch born German Shepherd, was acquired by Lafayette Police in August of 2002.

One of only five canine pairs in the Contra Costa Sheriff's Department, **Noah** and his handler **Officer Dan Hoffman** trained together as a team for several months before going on active duty. Since then, Noah has quickly become a very productive member of the force. According to Officer Hoffman, who gives commands to Noah in Dutch and German, "Noah tends to even out the score when we are faced with a group of bad guys. It may seem strange, but for some people, pointing a gun at them gets little reaction, but if they see a police dog, they tend to respond very quickly to our requests. Noah has been instrumental in many apprehensions, just by being on the scene with us."

It is thanks to Hoffman that Lafayette has Noah. In 2002 when the Sheriff's Department decided to embark on a canine program, Hoffman approached Chief Davis and asked if he thought Lafayette could be considered for the program. The Chief's response was, "Sure, if we could somehow pay for getting the dog." So Hoffman started collecting donations and through the generous contributions of Lafayette residents and businesses, raised $26,000, which paid for acquiring Noah and training programs for both of them. Ed Stokes and Diablo Foods were particularly generous in the fund raising effort.

Like most police dogs, Noah is friendly and playful when he is not working and is a favorite visitor around town. However, faced with potentially dangerous criminals, Noah is fierce and highly protective of his fellow police officers. When Noah has a job to do, you wouldn't want to find out if his bark is worse than his bite.

They're Our Roads!

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Lafayette, CA 94549-1968

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Carl Anduri	**Vice Mayor**
Carol Federighi	**Council Member**
Ivor Samson	**Council Member**
Don Tatzin	**Council Member**

For Council Members call: **284-1968**
Email **all** Council Members:
cityhall@lovelafayette.org

Administration

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Steven Falk, City Manager	**Fax: 284-3169**
Tracy Robinson, Admin. Srv. Dir.	**299-3227**
Gonzalo Silva, Financial Srv. Mgr.	**299-3213**
Joanne Robbins, City Clerk	**299-3210**

Parks, Trails and Recreation **284-2232**

Jennifer Russell, Director

Community Development

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Tony Coe, Engineering Srv. Mgr.	**284-1951**
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Ron Lefler, Public Works Srv. Mgr.	**299-3214**
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Dispatch: **284-5010**
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